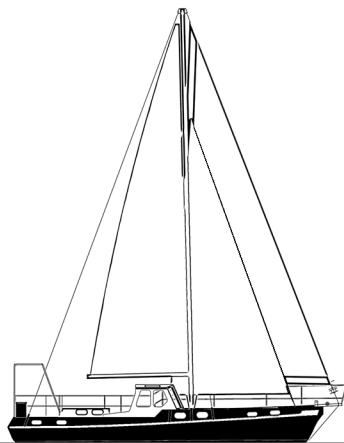




BEYOND THE FOUR J's



Storm clouds race above The Hazards casting dark shadows across the same pink granite mountains that the great French explorer Freycinet sketched from *Le Naturaliste* more than two hundred years earlier. Across Wineglass Bay a cold wetness is falling to an open horizon flecked white that calls our spirits to run free, close the last link, and complete the circle around Earth's largest inhabited island. So far, every link has needed courage and strength. Each has been as different as the colours in a rainbow.

To not lose the weather edge, we must commit to the south wind's fury and sail north knowing we will be alone at sea, not for hours, but days exceeding a week. Why is it Judith and I gamble our lives trekking the wild places? Why do we sally forth without thought of assistance, with few comforts, and fewer companions?



We go where there are no rules - except Nature's - survive. No marked lanes. No stoplights. As if wandering through the Garden of Eden, Earth and her creatures provide wonder, adventure, and entertainment. They reveal mysteries beyond our wisdom, offer knowledge by simply observing life.

In 1803, Captain Matthew Flinders became the first to circumnavigate the fifth continent, producing a map of remarkable accuracy on which for the first time, "Australia" was provocatively inscribed. Flinders would have

found Terra Australis little different from when man first wandered its vastness. However, his map would dramatically change that.

When the Industrial Revolution called our people from the land, our growth began to dominate the wild kingdom, taking what's wanted, leaving less for every creature. And while no one would deny the improvements we enjoy, we have upset Nature and have become more trapped by systems we've developed. Jude and I have long wondered if man's growing impact isn't robbing all Earth's creatures of a better life.

So we set off on one of the world's greatest adventures - Following Flinders wake around Australia - 9000 nautical miles across six climatic zones to explore more closely our adopted homeland. An ancient country, one filled with beauty, yet harsh, remote, and containing mysteries that still baffle the greatest minds.

We wanted to compare today's world with what we had seen on previous travels and write to our grandchildren, encouraging them to have a full life, one connected to Earth, with a positive influence on the course of mankind. During our odyssey, we posted many anecdotes home. Meant to educate as well as entertain, we peppered our stories with historical notes woven into the adventurous fabric of two grandparents alone, manning a powerful sailing craft through some of the world's most dangerous waters.

Our story begins many years earlier when two young people first met and found in the other a strength of character so strong each entrusted their life in the hands of the other. Coming from quite different backgrounds, instead of clashing, it added to our strength as a team. But this wasn't evident when we first embarked on our journey through life together.

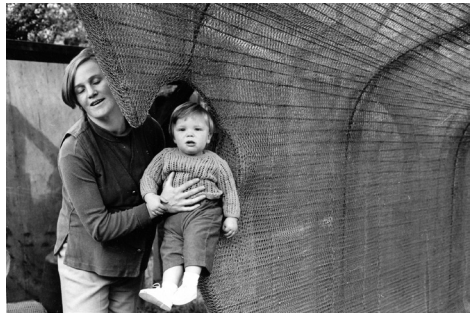
We met while hitchhiking around Europe, in the Frankfurt Youth Hostel, where I tried to talk Judith and her girlfriend Beth into travelling back to Berlin with me. They didn't have enough time for that, so we ended up challenging the other to a race to Paris using only our charm and wits. I won - but Jude says, "Doesn't matter." She and Beth had a really gay time sampling wines with two French hunks they met along the way.

Jude and I were married in a quaint north England church then set off in a dilapidated VW van we had rescued from a farmer's field. Mechanically fixing it up in her mother's driveway, then adding a bed and stove after replacing the Volkswagen's hard bench seat with two comfy Mercedes red bucket seats, that van became our first home as man and wife. From England, we journeyed down the war-torn continent of Africa, crying for Biafrans and fearing remnants of Simba and Mau-Mau. That year long journey opened our young eyes and sharpened our survival skills.

When we came to the sunburnt country of Australia in 1969, we found space everywhere with a feeling of "she'll be right" that encouraged us to not only start a family, but also to start the construction of a 12 metre sailing vessel. That arduous project took three years of really hard work and our two sons were walking by the time it was completed. That's when we

grabbed hold of our dream to share adventure and Nature with them before what seemed mandatory school years. Leaving our rented digs, we moved aboard our new yacht, naming her *Banyandah*, which means “home on the water.” We then boldly cast adrift our small business and friends.

In 1974, with sons aged two and three, we began a journey into the unknown. Starting with no sailing experience, frightened and unsure, we overcame many obstacles while our sea roving life eventually took us around the world touching eighty countries in an odyssey that lasted not the one year imagined, but the next fifteen.



Jason 11 months & Jude pregnant with Jerome

When our sons were toddlers, they frolicked with dusky natives on sugar white beaches. When others their age were just starting school, they played and stayed with the Muslims and Hindus of Asia. And when nine and ten, our sons soaked up the culture of Japan before enjoying the good life in Hawaii and the South Pacific as they entered puberty. And when still a bit wild, but now reliable sailing hands, we shared long night watches during a three year circumnavigation of the world on “voyages of education.” First stop, Africa to see the remaining wild beasts and gaze upon Egyptian mummies. Then we travelled through Europe teaching early civilizations to our sons. South America came next, to witness what remained of the wild Amazon and study Inca ruins, and that’s where we talked the Ecuadorian Navy into letting us tour all of the Galapagos. We told them their unique creatures belonged to every child of the world. Coming home to Australia, we stopped at Easter Island where the boys stayed with Orlando, a living legend mentioned in *Aku-Aku*. When we departed that mysterious isle, his son was on board, so he too could experience an ocean adventure just as his father had.

While travelling Earth, the reward for our dedication and hard work was meeting a diverse cross-section of people and seeing history’s greatest monuments, and of course, witnessing Earth’s magnificent beauty. All while boat-schooling our children to their final year of high school.

But, that was then. Life has moved on. The *Four J’s* have matured. We have grandchildren now, so it was just mom and pop who were free to continue exploring Earth. Our physical forms have weakened, our confidence has been tempered, but Jude and I have always heard the call of the wild beckoning us to again witness Nature in all her glory. So we unleashed our spirits to journey forth once again.

But before lines could be cast free, *Banyandah* needed repair. Her years of service had taken their toll. Home built by amateurs, which is what we were, she had a few inherent faults that needed to be put right. Plus with advancing age came a desire for more comfort. A desire for full headroom, a want for a shower with hot water on tap, and a need to make her more easy and safe to manage. So, the wrecking hammers came out. And once the first blow was struck, it became impossible to stop until only a shell remained, as bare and empty as when first concreted back in 1971.

Plans and dreams often melt away in the heat of execution. At best, they just take much longer. Life's that way. Family, work, recreation, all nibble away at project time and it is easy to lose focus. We had a five-year plan that stretched to ten, then another five years drifted by so swiftly that when celebrating our thirty-eighth year of marriage, with three grandchildren and more on the way, alarm bells began ringing when we looked in the mirror and saw grey hair and wrinkled faces looking back. Judith and I knew we had to go or never realize the dream we had kept alive since moving from the sea to the land. With that realization, a pang of doubt hardened in our guts and fear of failure stole into our hearts. We could have easily stayed on shore as most seniors would, to enjoy family and friends, but while we still had our good health, we knew we must go.

The best way to make certain something gets done is to set a deadline, so the very next morning we booked a crane to relaunch *Banyandah* in three months. Once committed, renewed energy flowed. And gosh, was it needed to finish the many tasks that always seem to be forgotten when setting deadlines.

After sixteen years afloat, followed by sixteen years sitting on our front lawn, a massive crane entered our drive and a new page in *Banyandah's* life began. To be honest, we were astounded to see that she indeed still floated. But to our immense pleasure, our dear lady took to the water like a beautiful black swan and a new adventure began. After so many years on the land, Judith and I had to re-hone old skills, and we had to test every one of *Banyandah's* new systems. Her machinery had been totally rebuilt, as had her electrics, plumbing, anchoring system; everything was new including a new rig and new rudder. Confidence in her, and ourselves, had to be created anew by putting both to trial.

There were blunders and failures, and we made errors, but overall, once again *Banyandah* became a superbly comfortable craft, easy to handle, and really great to live aboard.

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